

SOME FINDS OF THRYMSAS AND SCEATTAS IN ENGLAND

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FOR monetary historians interested in the English coinage of the seventh to the ninth centuries, this is a golden age. As well as substantial numbers of coins from controlled excavations, the flow of metal-detector finds is continually adding new provenances to the canon of information upon which our knowledge of monetary circulation rests. Not all the enthusiasts who search for coins are exemplary in reporting their finds scrupulously, but many are entirely cooperative and friendly in their willingness to help. The new information recorded below is almost all the outcome of such cooperation. Where the details can be reported only at second hand or with some degree of doubt, the deficiency has been made clear.

This collection of material, prompted by finds reported mainly during the years 1983–6, is in continuation of two earlier articles,¹ and complements the very successful work of recording finds undertaken by Mark Blackburn and Michael Bonser.

1. *London's river*

The recent suggestion that the *wic* or international market of pre-Alfredian London may lie under the modern Strand, Fleet Street, and Aldwych, i.e. to the west of St Paul's and outside the walls of medieval London, has added a lively interest to the detailed topography of finds of sceattas and early pennies from the capital.² Until very recently there were, disappointingly, hardly any sceatta provenances secure enough to add evidence to the history of eighth-century London. 'Found in the Thames at London' could equally well mean either east or west of St Paul's. Excavations on middle Saxon sites, and the watchfulness of Peter Stott at the Museum of London, have begun to change that situation. Careful enquiry has also made it clear that, of the great quantities of coins and other objects found in the Thames mud at low tide, sceattas make up only a minute fraction.³ A site as rich in coins as Hamwic may have existed where the West End now is; apart from one coin excavated recently at Covent Garden, however, we remain completely in ignorance of the sceattas it might still yield. The London finds that are beginning to accumulate tell a separate and different story, of finds from the waterfront of the walled city (although with some residual uncertainty whether the coins were lost where they were found), and finds certainly from the south bank directly opposite. There are at least two gold coins from this reach of the river, pointing to monetary activity at the waterfront

Acknowledgements. The writer wishes to express his thanks to the finders of the various coins discussed for their friendly and candid help in recording the provenances; to Miss Vanessa Fell for skilled conservation; and to Mr Mark Blackburn for his advice on an earlier draft of the article.

¹ D. M. Metcalf, 'Twelve notes on sceatta finds', *BNJ* 46 (1976), 1–18; and 'Twenty-five notes on sceatta finds', in *Sceattas in England and on the Continent*, edited by D. Hill

and D. M. Metcalf (Oxford, 1984) (hereafter *SEC*), pp. 193–205.

² M. Biddle, 'London on the Strand', *Popular Archaeology* (July 1984), 23–7. See also T. Tatton-Brown, 'The topography of Anglo-Saxon London', *Antiquity* 60 (1986), 21–8.

³ P. Stott, 'Recent finds of sceattas from the River Thames in London', in *SEC*, pp. 241–3.

already in the second half of the seventh century. But there are also finds from miles upstream at well-separated localities (Lambeth, Battersea, Putney, and Kew), including gold and a primary sceat; and also well downstream of the city, on both banks, at Wapping and Rotherhithe. Taken together with further finds from the north bank in Essex, as far east as Tilbury and Mucking, the picture that is emerging is of coin losses at a string of riverside sites, on both banks of the Thames, stretching for many miles. This evidence does not make one any less impatient to know what may lie under the West End, nor does it conflict with the attested commercial importance of 'London' in the age of Bede. It does, however, set both the city and the presumed *wic* in a wider regional context. The scattered finds are a corrective, a reminder that the trading advantages of access to the waterway were open to all. International trade was the motor of the money economy which grew up in the seventh century, and royal protection of the foreign merchants who visited the *wic* was no doubt an important condition of success, but the use of coinage was able very quickly to spread along the river.

A serious uncertainty about the finds from the Thames foreshore has been whether they were lost where they were found. The tidal ebb and flow might be presumed to carry small objects along with the surface mud; and there is also the possibility that finds were deposited into the river from elsewhere, in modern times. The observations of Stott are therefore important: he notes that on the City foreshore 'the concentration of deposited artefacts tends to show that objects have moved little over the centuries and, moreover, may even have remained in chronological layers'.⁴ Whatever uncertainties remain, we may accept that thrymsas and sceattas are very unlikely to have been shifted by the flow of the river from the north foreshore fronting the City, to the south foreshore.

The Thames hoard of c.1860 is from London but is otherwise of quite uncertain provenance.⁵ The Roach Smith coins (from before 1854) are said to be from 'the city of London', while several recent finds are described, more vaguely, as being 'from London' or 'from the Thames foreshore'.⁶ A sceat, of undescribed type, is alleged to have been found with the Waterloo Bridge hoard of late-ninth century pennies, 'on the west side of the second pier from the Surrey shore'.⁷ It seems rather unlikely that a sceat accidentally found in the ninth century would have been put back into circulation or hoarded with pennies of Burgred. As its find-spot is so close to Aldwych and the eastern section of the Strand, perhaps one should, without seeking to base anything on it, accept it as a coincidence that it was brought out with the hoard, and regard it as a genuine eighth-century loss, a coin that fell into the river. A mile further upstream, and beyond Thorney, a sceat of series T, type 9 is reported 'from the Thames shore near Lambeth Bridge'⁸ – but it is not made clear at which end of the bridge. A pale gold thrymsa of Pada (originally believed to be a sceat) has been published as having been found in the Thames near Kew.⁹ Some slight doubt has been cast on the exact reliability of this provenance, although none on the coin itself. It is the third Pada from London, as there were two among Roach Smith's fifteen sceattas. The coin is now in the National Museum of Wales. One may mention also another thrymsa now in Cardiff, of the 'Witmen' group, Sutherland 62, which was found 'on the bank of the Thames at Blackfriars' in 1848. This presumably means on the northern bank, not too far from Blackfriars Bridge, and Biddle may well be correct in locating it just outside the walled city.¹⁰

⁴ Stott, p. 242

⁵ The circumstances and grid reference in *SEC*, p. 254 are the suggestion of the late S. E. Rigold and rest, I believe on no earlier documentary evidence.

⁶ *SEC*, pp. 254f.

⁷ *SEC*

⁸ *SEC*

⁹ *SCMB* (1977), E1076. Chemical analysis established that it was of pale gold, and it was omitted from the check-list in *SEC*. See S. E. Rigold and D. M. Metcalf, 'A check-list of English finds of sceattas', *BNJ* 47 (1977), 31–52, at p.41.

¹⁰ It is so shown on his map.

Another pale gold thrymsa, this one of the 'two emperors' type, was found in c.1984 by a Mr Matthieson on the south bank foreshore between Southwark Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge (near the old LWT studios). The dies are unrecorded, and appear to fall late in the sequence (**pl. 1, 1**). The obverse has three diadem ties (adrift), and on the reverse there are single pellets, rather than groups of pellets, at the upper left and right. The weight is 1.28g. Analysis by Dr J. P. Northover shows gold contents of 22 per cent.¹¹ The finder kindly agreed to an exchange, against an unprovenanced specimen, so that the London coin is now in the Ashmolean Museum.

Both the Cardiff coins have been analysed by EPMA by Dr Northover¹² at the Department of Metallurgy and Science of Materials, Oxford, with the following results:

'Witmen':	Au 52.55, Ag 45.04, Cu 2.00, Fe 0.05, Co 0.02, Ni 0.02, Zn 0.04, Bi —, Sb —, Sn —, Pb 0.27%
Pada:	Au 19.63, Ag 79.06, Cu 0.81, Fe 0.36, Co tr, Ni tr, Zn 0.02, Bi —, Sb —, Sn —, Pb 0.11%
'Two emperors':	Au 21.84, Ag 67.53, Cu 3.78, Fe 0.02, Co —, Ni —, Zn 1.20, Bi —, Sb —, Sn —, Pb 0.43%

Stott was able to record a coin of series A from Wapping, and two others of series E and F from Battersea just downstream from a settlement apparently of about the same date as the coins.¹³ He has since obtained photographs of the coins of series A and F, which he has kindly allowed me to include here (**pl. 1, 2–3**) in order to complete the record. The first coin is from obverse die A3, 10 (new reverse). The reverse of the coin of series F lacks the letters T, T, I, I which are added in the angles of the cross on many specimens.

A considerable number of mainly eleventh- and twelfth-century coins have been recovered from the spoil removed during redevelopment of the Billingsgate Lorry Park site and dumped at a distance. A sceat of series Z reliably reported to be from Billingsgate spoil, thus towards the eastern end of the City (although possibly from made ground of the twelfth century), passed through the hands of a Surrey dealer and was acquired by the Ashmolean Museum in 1986 (**pl. 1, 4**). It weighs 1.22g and is from the same obverse die as a specimen in the Evans bequest (see the Corpus below). Another Billingsgate find, now in the Museum of London, appears to be of series K, type 33, but its condition makes close identification difficult.

Publication is awaited of a sceat of series V from the site of the old Covent Garden market. It is in very weathered condition, but the identification is not in doubt,¹⁴ and the style seems to be regular.

Another coin recently recovered in controlled excavations (**pl. 1, 5**) comes from the Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Unit's excavation at Bermondsey Abbey.¹⁵ It should probably be adjudged imitative. The better side (the obverse?) reproduces the reverse of type 33 (again), in a hitherto unknown style. The treatment of the truncated neck is novel. The round eye, the fierce fangs, and the elaborately curled tongue were evidently understood as necessary parts of the design. The other side is very crude, and quite unlike the competent bust of type 33. It may be intended as a copy of the 'bird and

¹¹ I am indebted to Dr Northover for his kind cooperation in the analysis of this and the other gold coins.

¹² Cf. the higher figure for gold in the surface layers of the Pada, in D. M. Metcalf, 'Chemical analyses of English sceattas', *BNJ* 48 (1978), 12–19, at p. 13.

¹³ Stott, p. 242f., notes that the Wapping coin is very unlikely to be from an undisturbed context, but that the two from Battersea well may be.

¹⁴ For the site, see D. Whipp, 'Thoughts on Saxon London', *The London Archaeologist* 5, no. 6 (1986), 148–50.

I am indebted to Mr Stott for showing me photographs of the coin, which is to be published by the North London Archaeological Unit.

¹⁵ Cf. D. Beard, 'The infirmary of Bermondsey Priory', *The London Archaeologist* 5, no. 7 (1986), 187–91; also W. F. Grimes, *The excavation of Roman and Medieval London* (1968), pp. 210–17. I am grateful to be allowed to discuss the coin here, again through the kind intervention of Mr Stott.

branch' design of type 23b. The weight is 0.86g. Roach Smith's coins from London included an imitative 'bird and branch'/type 48 mule,¹⁶ which is not, however, close in style to the Bermondsey Abbey find.

A sceat which has the distinction of having been found twice comes from the south bank of the river at Putney, near the boat slope. The finder located it with a metal detector, accidentally dropped it in the mud, and gave up hope of recovering it. Later in the day, as he retraced his steps, he unexpectedly found it again. This was in about 1976, and the find spot was published in the following year. The writer acquired the coin from the finder in 1984. It is of series L, with standing figure holding a falcon, but the design is laterally reversed, the falcon being on the left (**pl. 1, 6**). The falcon occurs in types 18, 19, and 20 (and 13). In type 18 the obverse bust is accompanied by a cross (as here, but again laterally reversed), whereas on type 20 it is accompanied by a cup with cross of four dots above. The reverse of type 18 regularly has a T-shaped element to the lower right. The Putney coin is too weathered for one to be quite certain that the T-shaped element is absent, although it appears to be. If so, the coin could be described as a type 18/20 mule with lateral reversal of both designs. The style of the standing figure, however, is very similar to that of type 19, (*BMC* 105), (**pl. 1, 7**) and is in all probability by the same hand. The dress is straight-sided and flares slightly. It is high-waisted, with a couple of horizontal lines as shading in the top half and vertical lines on the skirt. The outline of a cloak, slightly longer than the skirt, can be seen on the British Museum specimen. It may be present, but is indistinct, on the Putney coin. On both coins, the arm holding the cross is a sweeping curve, with a pellet where it meets the staff. The same style of dress and cloak appears on a specimen of type 18 kindly communicated to me by Dr Ian Stewart; it was found in Essex. The metal of the Putney find appears to be copper and the weight is 0.77g. The coin should perhaps be classified as type 19 var., but type 19 hardly deserves to be considered a substantive type, while only a couple of specimens are known. Whether they are 'official' products from late in series L, or fraudulent imitations is difficult to say.

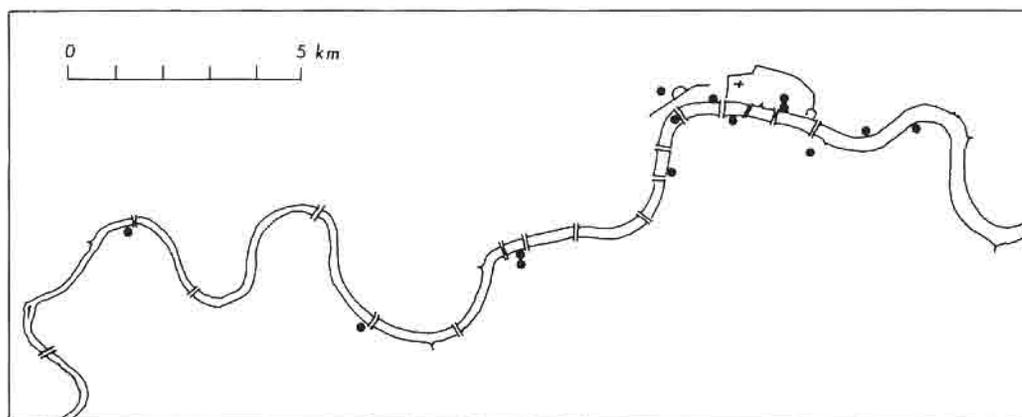


FIG. 1 Finds of thrymsas and sceattas along the course of the lower Thames (Kew (A/), Putney, Battersea (2), Lambeth Bridge, Waterloo Bridge, Covent Garden, Blackfriars Bridge (A/), Blackfriars/Southwark Bridges (A/), Billingsgate, Bermondsey, Wapping, Rotherhithe). The position of Strand and Aldwych, and of the City of London, with St. Paul's and the Tower, are indicated.

¹⁶ This coin is discussed in relation to type 48 in a paper submitted for the forthcoming *Proceedings* of the International Numismatic Congress, 1986

The reverse of a coin of type 15a var. from the F. Elmore Jones collection¹⁷ is again almost certainly by the same hand. The straight-sided, flaring outline of the cloak is distinctive (pl. 1, 8). The obverse has two large letters in front of the face, apparently U V, reminiscent of a 'wolf' sceat of series K.¹⁸ The evidence thus tends to point to an eclectic little group of coins that are, at least in some sense, imitative. How they will fit into the wider picture to be derived from a stylistic analysis of the whole of series K and L remains to be seen.

The Wapping find, described by the finder but not seen by an expert, was evidently a 'porcupine' (series E). From Rotherhithe, on the opposite shore, there is a specimen of series S, of which publication is forthcoming.¹⁹

The topographical usefulness of all the above finds is summed up by the map (fig. 1). The ratio of gold to silver finds is high in comparison with any other area except east Kent, and even allowing that the sample may well not be perfectly random it points to the early monetary importance of the Thames at London. Similarly the ratio of primary to secondary phase sceattas is quite high.

There is no possibility of making quantitative comparisons between the presumed *wic* and the city. One certainly should not imagine, however (the finds already make this clear), that the walled city lay deserted while the *wic* flourished. London in the sixth century may have been 'a virtually empty shell, full of the decaying ruins of Roman buildings', but it is likely that the founding of St Paul's marked the beginning of a period of revival.

2. A collection of finds from north Essex

Differences in the balance of sceatta types found in Essex and Suffolk, and the occurrence of a distinctive type in Essex are the main arguments to support the claim, first made in 1976, that the East Saxon kings struck their own coinage.²⁰ The distribution pattern for series S (the 'sphinx' or more correctly 'female centaur' type) can now be drawn taking account of twenty or twenty-one English finds (fig. 2), including three recorded below and others that await publication. With this substantial increase in numbers, and (just as important) as negative evidence from elsewhere accumulates, the pattern becomes more convincing. It is an essentially north-of-the-Thames distribution which does not, however, extend into the kingdom of East Anglia.

Series Z was also provisionally claimed, in 1976, as East Saxon, using arguments of exactly the same nature as for series S.²¹ New provenances, although not as numerous, have already confirmed that series Z belongs to eastern England, but they are on balance more northerly: Billingsgate, 'near London', Thetford, and Caistor St Edmunds. With these should be considered a related new type, with a similar arch-backed animal, found at Methwold (Norfolk) and in the Aston Rowant hoard. If series Z is East Anglian, it raises the difficult problem of how it relates to series R 1. On the present showing, it seems to belong to Norfolk rather than Suffolk.

Another difficult set of questions concerns the place of London in the East Saxon kingdom. Was it still under the control of the East Saxon kings during the earlier phases of the sceatta coinage, and did it at some point fall into the hands of Æthelbald of Mercia? Was London the mint of series B? And was an East Saxon mint subsequently opened

¹⁷ Published by P. V. Hill in *NC* 13 (1953), 107 as type 15a var., pl. 6, 30, and offered for sale in *NCirc* 78 (1970), 407, item 11185 and ill. 111, illustrated here from Dr Hill's cast collection, now in the Ashmolean Museum.

¹⁸ D. M. Metcalf and D. R. Walker, 'The "wolf" sceattas', *BNJ* 36 (1967), 11-28, pl. 7, 34.

¹⁹ The coin is worn and apparently base. I am indebted to Mr M. J. Bonser for advance information about the find.

²⁰ D. M. Metcalf, 'Twelve notes on sceatta finds', *BNJ* 46 (1976), 1-18, at pp. 8-13.

²¹ Metcalf, 'Twelve notes on sceatta finds'.

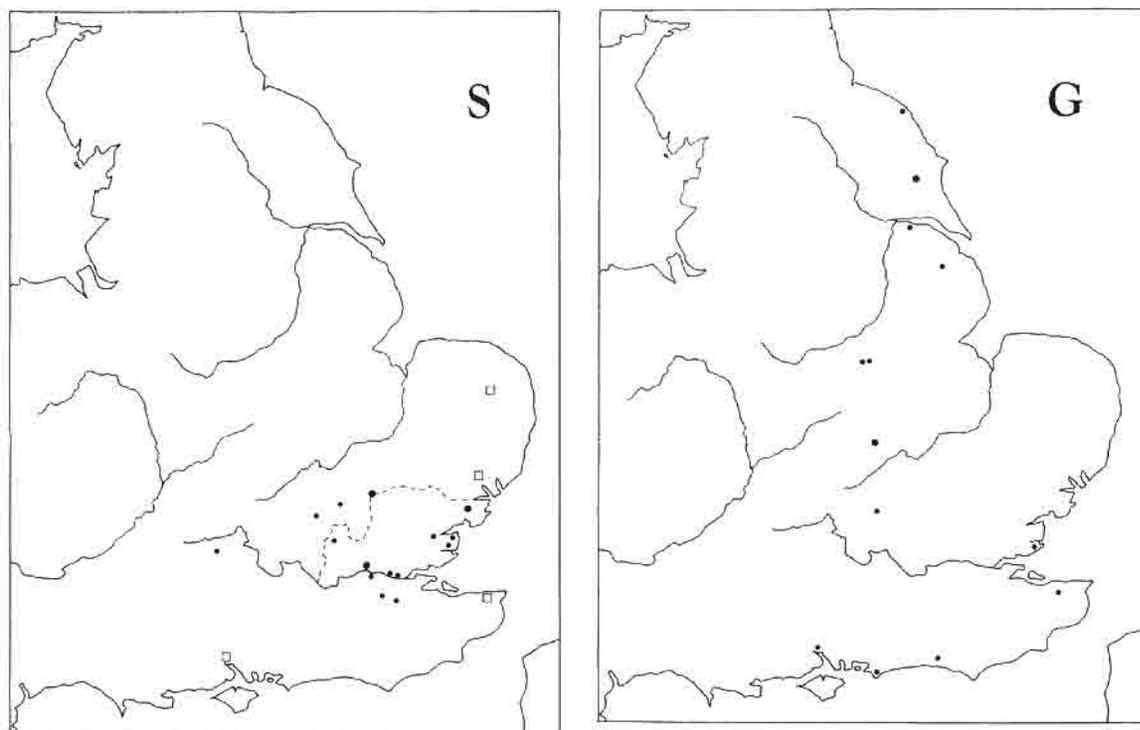


FIG. 2 Finds of 'female centaur' sceattas, series S. Larger dots = two or more coins. The location of the two 'north Essex' finds is conjectural, and the Tilbury provenance rests on hearsay. Other unpublished finds include five from the very rich site in the Royston area (Blackburn, forthcoming), and singletons from Bradwell-on-Sea, Ess., near Southminster, Ess. (not Bradwell), 'near the Thames shore in Essex', Rotherhithe, and Farnborough, K (GLon). The outlier from Sevenhampton, Wilt is unconfirmed. The grave-find from Wrotham, K is in derelict condition. Note the complete absence of series S at the major sites of Barham, Sf, Caistor-by-Norwich, Reculver, and Hamwic (open squares). The probable eighth-century boundaries of the kingdom of Essex are shown by a broken line.

FIG. 3 Finds of BMC type 3a, series G. Larger dots = two or more coins.

somewhere further to the east (e.g. at Colchester)? The distribution-pattern of series B is significantly more scattered than that for series S, but certainly within the frontiers of Essex finds of series B are more plentiful than series A — which is presumably Kentish.

Amid so many uncertainties, only new finds can be expected to make the answers clearer. A group of eleven sceattas from 'north Essex' should therefore be welcomed. The writer was given colour photographs of them by an acquaintance in whose information he places much confidence. The finder was a third party who was too nervous to come forward himself. It was not revealed whether 'north Essex' meant north-east or north-west, but there is no reason to doubt that one or the other is true. Along with the sceattas six later Anglo-Saxon pennies and five post-Conquest coins were photographed, as well as six hooked tags, which Dr James Graham-Campbell has identified as of mid/late Saxon types. The persistent exploration of a productive site over several seasons may yield, eventually, a surprising number of sceattas, as we now know from the experience of sites such as Barham (Suffolk) or Sancton. This is the probable background to the group of coins from north Essex, found c. 1980–3, which may be listed as follows:

1. Series A. Cf. perhaps A2, 8b. On the reverse the letters TA to left of the standard are clear, and there are the

- feet of several letters to the right. At the upper left corner there appears to be a small cross diagonally, rather than the normal down-curving element. (pl. 1, 9)
2. Series B II, Cf. B II, 3. (pl. 1, 10)
 3. Series E. Secondary 'porcupine'. Simple obverse, with three lines within curve. Diagonally symmetrical reverse, with three pellets in one side of the border, pseudo-letters V A etc. in another. The relatively uncommon diagonal pattern occurs again, by chance, on a coin from Sussex (below) and is occasionally used in series R 2 (pl. 1, 11).
 4. Series G. Three crosses, and a group of three pellets. Two additional pellets between. The style appears to be regular, cf. the Garton-on-the-Wolds specimens, Rigold 1960-1, pl. 4 (modelling of the neck; small cross flanked by dots in outer border of the reverse), but not particularly early. For a discussion of imitations of series G, cf. the report on the Repton finds, below. (pl. 1, 12).
 5. Series K. type 20. From the same obv. and probably the same rev. as BMC 66. (pl. 1, 13).
 6. Series K, type 20 var/18. Obv. with heavily modelled neck. Cross with four large pellets visible above the cup. Rev. Letter T to right of figure (pl. 1, 14). The style of the rev. appears to be similar to BMC 101. Manifestly by the same hand as BMC 162 (type 34) (pl. 1, 15,) and probably also Hill, NC (1953), pl. 6. 16 (20 var./18 mule, ex Barnett bequest) (pl. 1, 16); and cf. Lockett sale, lot 232b.
 7. Series K/U. Obv. Imitation of rev. of 'bird and branch' design ('London' style). Rev. Cruciform interlace pattern. The rev. is an elaborate example of type 52, but here with 5 dots at the centre. Stewart Type 100. Stewart colln., ex SCMB March 1983, E 162, this specimen. (pl. 1, 17).
- There are several *comparanda* to be taken into account. The interlace design is repeated, in a slightly less elaborate form, on the very rare 'Victory' sceattas, type 101 (pl. 1, 18, rev. only) and on type 52. The drapery on the obverse of type 52 is variable, and the elaborate version seen on BMC 198, from Reculver (related to type 33, BMC 158) is not necessarily the earliest: it is associated with a much simplified interlace from which the rosettes have disappeared. The Richborough specimen, with rosettes and with *obv.*, half-circles of drapery (Hill, NC (1953), pl. 6, 10) could be the earlier. This sequence would allow us to see as early a unique coin, type 52 var., with *obv.* drapery much as on the Richborough specimen, and *rev.* (as here) a bungled imitation of the 'bird and branch' design (found at Walbury Camp, BNJ 47 (1977), pl. 2, 25).
- The simplest form of interlace design is used again, linked with a series L, type 12
- ◆ϷJVN00IIIA+ obverse on a coin found at Normanby, Lincs. (SCBI Mack 341).
- Too few specimens are known from which to build a scheme of classification, but provisionally, if we take the progressive simplification of the interlace design as the guiding feature, it is possible to construe the North Essex find as standing at the head of an eclectic group of very scarce varieties which probably all belong together. The list would run: 1, North Essex ('bird and branch'/interlace), 2, Walbury Camp (type 52/'bird and branch'), 3, Richborough (type 52 with half circles of drapery), 4, Reculver (type 52 with saddleback drapery), 5, Normanby (type 12/52).
8. Series L, type 12. Blundered inscription? The style of the bust is not one that is commonly associated with the type. A closely comparable obverse, with triple wreath-ties, is found on Lockett 230a. Worn and clay incrustated. (pl. 2, 19).
 9. Series R I. (pl. 2, 20). Large-flan coins in exactly this style occur in the Aston Rowant hoard (deposited c. 705-10) alongside small-flan coins of the same type. In Rigold's original classification, C = R 1. It now seems probable that the issues of two main mints, in two styles or fabrics, should be distinguished among the early runic coins, and that it would be convenient to refer to those which are apparently a continuation of series A as series C, and those on large flans as R 1. Blackburn has proposed the attribution of series C to Kent. Where the East Anglian issues begin is not yet certain, and there are styles that are difficult to fit into either category, but the larger coins, such as this one, may well represent the earliest issue of runic coins at an East Anglian mint. For that reason the Aston Rowant hoard is important in that it demonstrates that the two fabrics - together with the ITAT variety (see below, note 5, and *Oxoniensia* 37 (1972), 243f.) - were in existence side by side at an early date.
 10. Series S. The off-centre striking of the 'female centaur' die is characteristic. (pl. 2, 21).
 11. Similar. (pl. 2, 22).

The proportion of primary or intermediate to secondary phase coins appears to be 3 or 4 to 7 or 8. The occurrence of two more specimens of series S in Essex has been discussed above. One may add a further specimen, weathered on the high parts of the relief, but otherwise in fresh and attractive condition, recently reported from 'near the Thames shore in Essex'. Its weight is 1.15g (pl. 2, 23).²² Series K and L are well represented. The K/U

²² I am indebted to Mr Frank Purvey who showed me this coin.

mule is apparently unique. If it is contemporary with its prototype in series U, type 23 b/d, it is relatively early in date.

3. *Three sceattas from St Nicholas at Wade, Thanet*

More than eighty sceattas are on record as having been found in the 'east Kent triangle' (Reculver – Richborough – Canterbury).²³ These and the Hamwic finds are the two major assemblages of material in England from which one may study the composition of the sceatta currency in a particular locality, and thence regional variations in the currency. The Richborough and Canterbury coins are nearly all from controlled excavations, but the circumstances of discovery of the Reculver finds are extremely vague. Many of them are likely to be coastal finds, but others may be from the Isle of Thanet. Apart from cemetery finds, the remaining single finds with reliable find-spots in north-east Kent boil down to Stourmouth and Wingham. The three new finds now reported are therefore welcome especially because their exact find-spots are known. They are from the north-western edge of the Isle of Thanet, a couple of kilometres north-east of Sarre. They were found in the parish of St Nicholas at Wade (OE *wād*, a ford) where people used to wade across the Wantsum Channel at low tide to reach the Isle of Thanet. Two of the coins were found in 1984–5 a little to the east or south-east of the hamlet of Shuart, north of the A28 road (TR 275674 and 280672 approx.), where the ground begins to fall away northwards. One was of series BX, and the other of series D. The third coin was found by another person in the same general area in 1986 and is of series H (type 48).

The coin of series BX, in rather weathered condition, weighs 1.01g after cleaning (pl. 2, 24). It is almost certainly from the same reverse die as two from Caistor St Edmunds. With the finds from Mucking (Essex), Cranham (Essex), and Hickleton (Yorks.) these bring the corpus of BX coins (which are the earliest issues of series B, arguably from London or at any rate a mint north of the Thames — see above) to thirteen (BX 4 should be omitted).²⁴ The eleven that can be studied seem to be from nine obverse and ten reverse dies, which suggests that there were originally a couple of dozen obverse dies, and at least that many reverses.

The specimen of series D is struck on a markedly wedge-shaped flan, the weak part of the impression being at the thickest side. It weighs 1.26g (pl. 2, 25).

The coin of series H, type 48 (pl. 2, 26) weighing 0.97g, is one of two found recently in eastern England, and has been used to argue that type 48, unlike types 39 and 49, cannot be from the Hamwic mint, because its distribution-pattern is so different.²⁵ The dies of the Thanet coin are not the same as any in the Hamwic corpus of type 48.²⁶ The obverse is of careful work, and the reverse is distinctive in that the three chains of dots emerging from the creatures' mouths are each sharply bent to follow the contour of the jaw and brow of the next creature.

4. *Two south midlands finds of series L, type 12, in a distinctive style, from Lewknor (Oxfordshire) and from Chipping Warden (Northants.)*

A coin of series L, type 12 (pl. 2, 27) was found by Mr G. Ponting at South Weston, Lewknor in or shortly before 1985, on a track known as Bridge Way, some little distance north of the Lower Icknield Way, and about the same distance from the vicarage (SU

²³ D. M. Metcalf, 'Twenty-five notes on sceatta finds', in *SEC*, pp. 193–205, at pp. 203f.

²⁴ See also the note on an unconfirmed find from Minster-in-Thamet (*SEC*, p.256)

²⁵ D. M. Metcalf, in a paper read at the International Numismatic Congress, 1985.

²⁶ In a forthcoming volume of the Southampton excavation reports.

7098). Its style is essentially very similar to *SCBI Glasgow* 83 and 84, with a retroussé and indeed sharply-pointed nose. The legend is **DELVHOOIIIA+**

As on *Glasgow* 83 the crown of the head is outlined by a row of five pellets, and the roll of the hair is quite strongly modelled. One may fairly assume that the die is by the same hand. The reverse is less distinctive, but note the doubling of the boat-shaped curve, as on *Glasgow* 83–4. The weight is 1.00g. The coin is now in the writer's collection.

A cast of *Glasgow* 83 was acquired by the British Museum (Hill, *NC* (1953), pl. 6,4). It is presumably modern. *Glasgow* 83 and 84 appear to be from the same reverse, and the coupling of what are superficially very different obverses is a little offputting. Is the obverse of 84 worn through use, and if so is it the earlier? Happily, the Lewknor find now authenticates the style, for which it seems to be one of only two provenances so far recorded, the second being the coin from Chipping Warden discussed immediately below. The 'crest' outlining the head is seen again in series T, and in series L, type 14, *BMC* 93, from the Thames hoard. The prototype is presumably Constantinian, but the interesting question is whether series L derives the crest from series T, or independently from another source.

A find from Chipping Warden in 1984 or earlier is the second sceat reported from the 'Black grounds' — some fields to the north of a Roman villa site, half a mile east of the village.²⁷ The first such find dates from before 1847. A reliable intermediary kindly passed on a polaroid photograph (pl. 2, 28). The coin is lit from an unusual angle, but careful study suggests that it is very similar to *SCBI Glasgow* 84. The bean-shaped face, the retroussé and sharply pointed nose, and the shoulders of the standing figure should be compared. The legend seems to read **LVN••UAN+** the final cross pommée being faint but visible.

Another obverse in the same distinctive style, and with the legend apparently ending **NM+** in front of the face, as on *SCBI Glasgow* 85, was in the F. Elmore Jones collection,²⁸ coupled with a regular London reverse.

5. Two finds from a trackway on the South Downs

Finds from ridgeways and hill forts on chalk downland, far from any settlement, are well attested, and raise intriguing questions about the uses to which sceattas were put, and the classes of persons who handled them. Two isolated finds from Sussex can now be added to this category.

Mr J. N. King has kindly permitted me to record a find of a 'porcupine' sceat made in 1984, at the junction of two trackways on Highdole Hill, on the South Downs to the west of Lewes (TQ 396043), about 1 km north-west of Telscombe. The coin (pl. 2, 29) is a secondary 'porcupine', weighing 1.04g, from the same distinctive obverse die as *SCBI Copenhagen* 30 — with pseudo letters INI within the curve. On the reverse the design within the standard is different. Unusually, it is diagonally symmetrical. Most interestingly, the pattern in the margins is identical: +II in one side and a zig-zag in another, with the same rustic corners. It does not seem to be a case of the same punches, nor an altered die, but the hand is very obviously the same. A second equally interesting feature is that the coin is deeply nicked, apparently by a chisel cut, intended to test the metal or to check that the coin is not a plated forgery. There are in fact two cuts in the coin, a deeper one at 1 o'clock on the obverse as illustrated, and a shallow one at 10 o'clock. More than 80 per cent of the coins in the large Bais hoard from Brittany are cut in exactly this way, and so are a few of

²⁷ *VCH Northants*, I, 200.

²⁸ *NCirc* 78 (1970), 407, item 11185 and ill.109.

those from the Plassac hoard.²⁹ The mints most subject to chisel testing are those of Poitou, together with Bourges and Rouen. The practice seems to be unknown in England, the Telscombe find being only the second instance to be noted. The implication is that it had been in western France before being carried across the Channel to Sussex. (The other instance is a Merovingian coin from the *civitas* of Limoges found in England, in the Royston area.)

Mr King returned to the find-spot in July 1985 and eventually found another sceat, approximately five metres away from where he had found the first, and again on the trackway. He writes, 'we do find it very strange though, that although we have very thoroughly covered the Ridgeway for a great distance either side of where we actually found the sceattas, we have to date found no other coinage, although the pathway has been in constant use for many centuries. The only other finds have been cartridge cases and bullets ...' The second coin (pl. 2, 30) is of series C, of a variety distinguished by a small standard with the letters TAT or ITAT to the right. The standard is outlined in heavy dots. The obverse follows precedent in reading *Tepa*, and has TAT (again) behind the head. Other specimens of the same stylistic variety include *BMC* 36–8, *SCBI Glasgow* 10, and Lockett 209i.

6. *A coin of series G excavated at Aylesbury: the recognition of a 'continental' type of distribution-pattern for Primary/Intermediate sceattas in England*

In 1972 I suggested that series G (= *BMC* Type 3a) belonged to Sussex, on the evidence of the few provenances then available.³⁰ It is by now clear that I was wrong, and must retract. A surprising number of new finds of series G have been reported, from all over southern England. Analyses have shown that the better specimens of the type are 85–92 per cent silver.³¹ Its origins are therefore presumably in the Intermediate phase. At that stage there are only a certain number of regions in England from which series G could come, if it were English, and one would expect quite clear-cut signs of localization. It is so uncommon in east Kent and at Hamwic that it cannot have been minted in either of those regions. Nor can it be from Essex or East Anglia. The map (fig. 3), which includes various different styles of series G, and specimens covering the widest range of alloys, serves to draw attention to several northerly finds, which make up a significant proportion of the assemblage from the north midlands (two finds from Northampton,³² Wymeswold,³³ Six Hills on the Fosse Way,³⁴ Binbrook in Lincolnshire,³⁵ South Ferriby,³⁶) and Yorkshire (Garton-on-the-Wolds, and Whitby). None of the other published type-distribution maps of English sceattas³⁷ looks at all like this, unless perhaps that for type 85 (Series B III B).³⁸ It is implausible that the substantive issues of series G are from a mint in the north midlands, the more so when one takes account of the finds from Sussex and Southampton. The alternative is to look to the Continent, and, given the scarcity of series G at Domburg (only seven among 998 finds),³⁹ more specifically to northern France. Finds from Corbie

²⁹ M. Prou and E. Bougenot, *Catalogue des deniers mérovingiens de la trouvaille de Bais (Ille-et-Vilaine)* (revised edition by J. Lafaurie), [1981].

³⁰ D. M. Metcalf, 'The "bird and branch" sceattas in the light of a find from Abingdon', *Oxoniensia* 37 (1972), 51–65 at p.65. The same view is repeated in *SEC*, p.40. Several northerly finds have been reported since 1984, forcing a reconsideration.

³¹ *id.*, 'Chemical analyses of English sceattas', *BNJ* 48 (1978), 12–19; analyses O.124 and M.8.

³² Both seem to be imitative.

³³ M. A. S. Blackburn and M. J. Bonser, 'Single finds of Anglo-Saxon and Norman coins – 2', *BNJ* 55 (1985), 55–78,

item 74. The authors kindly allowed me to see their study in advance of publication.

³⁴ To be published.

³⁵ Blackburn and Bonser, item 10.

³⁶ A metal-detector find on the Humber foreshore in 1984. I am indebted to Miss E. J. E. Pirie for information about the coin, which was adjudged too corroded to clean.

³⁷ See *SEC*, pp. 37–9 and 45 for eight maps.

³⁸ Not separately mapped, but see *SEC* pp. 30–2 and the map at p. 33; and above, p. 6.

³⁹ W. Op den Velde, W. J. De Boone, and A. Pol, 'A survey of sceatta finds from the Low Countries' *SEC*, 117–45 at pp. 140f.

Abbey in Picardy and from Étapes, and the copying of the type at the mint of Saint-Ouen de Rouen provide important evidence; and the Sussex finds are on the facing coast. The continental evidence, and the various styles of die-cutting have been discussed in detail elsewhere,⁴⁰ with the tentative suggestions that series G may turn out to be from Quentovic, and that its unusual distribution-pattern in the midlands and north may be deceptive as to place of origin, and may reflect the journeys of pilgrims or other travellers returning from France, e.g. via Hamwic. There is a significant contrast between series G and series D, the continental runic type, which presumably belongs to the Low Countries: D has a more easterly distribution pattern in England than G.

The argument set out above, that the distribution of series G in England is explicable only in terms of a continental origin, is essentially the same as that applied to the 'porcupine' sceattas (series E), except that they appear to belong to the Rhine mouths. There are more coastal finds of 'porcupines', and a straight-forwardly 'commercial' interpretation, invoking coastwise trade, is in order.⁴¹

One more recent find of series G, adds usefully to the evidence for a 'continental' distribution. It comes from excavations at Aylesbury in 1985.⁴² It is similar in style to a specimen from the Cimiez hoard,⁴³ and weighs 1.08 g (**pl. 2, 31**).

7. *A coin of series B from southern Norfolk*

The distinctive obverse die B I B, 3 was used with at least three reverse dies, and this is the eighth specimen known. There was one in the Milton Regis grave-find. There is no reason to doubt the provenance of this specimen, bought in 1985, (B I B, 3 i d, 1.17g), which is in any case certainly an English find (**pl. 2, 32**).

8. *A coin of series D from Thetford*

A curious specimen of series D (**pl. 2, 33**) bought in 1986, is said to have been found near Thetford. The style of the obverse is crude, and suggests imitation, although type 2c itself is very variable and erratic, as may be judged e.g. from the specimens in the Aston Rowant hoard. The neck and ear are clumsy. The letter in front of the face is probably copied from the pseudo-rune **Ń** seen on some regular issues. The weight, 0.88g, is low.⁴⁴

9. *A 'porcupine' sceat from West Wycombe, Bucks*

A second sceat found by a member of the South Bucks Metal Detecting Club is believed to come from the same site as the first. It was found in 1984 and was reported, in a mixed bag of material, to the staff of the County Museum at Aylesbury. From there it was referred to the writer and subsequently, with the agreement of the land-owner, it was professionally valued and sold.

The coin is a 'porcupine', of a rather simplified design (**pl. 2, 34**). Although it weighs 1.20g, it is presumably of the Secondary phase. No close parallels to the reverse have been found.

⁴⁰ See below, pp. 19–23.

⁴¹ See *SEC*, pp. 32 and 41–43.

⁴² The coin is to be published in *Records of Buckinghamshire*. I am indebted to Mr M. Farley who made the coin available for study.

⁴³ Le Gentilhomme, 'La circulation des sceattas dans la Gaule mérovingienne'. *RN* 2 (1938), 23–49, pl. 3, 25.

⁴⁴ The coin was acquired for the Ashmolean Museum through the generosity of Mr J. Eric Engstrom.

10. *A 'porcupine' sceat from Bosham, Sussex*

It is now possible to add to the details about a find from Bosham in 1984. The coin (pl. 2, 35) was found by Mrs B. McPherson in her garden, in Old Bosham (SU 810038).⁴⁵

The coin appears to have a lightly modelled boss in the centre of the standard, in place of the usual annulet. The pattern of the reverse is a fairly common one, e.g. in the Kloster Barthe hoard, but the obverse is unusual.

11. *A find of series H from Kingston Deverill, Wilts*

A sceat of series H, type 49 is said to have been found at a ford over the River Wylie just to the east of Kingston Deverill (ST 852373), about 9 km south of Warminster. An intermediary living in Warminster, Mr R. Pike, initially sent rubbings and a sketch of the coin to the Ashmolean Museum with a request for it to be identified. Thereafter he helpfully made enquiries, and was told that it was found at a ford at Brixton Deverill. After studying the map, he suggested that this was a confusion with the nearby Kingston Deverill. It is one of only a few finds from so far west and north of Southampton (where it was minted); one was found in excavations at Glastonbury, and another seems to have been a chance find at Marlborough. The Kingston Deverill coin, which weighs 0.82g, is of variety 5 a i (as is the Selsey find), and thus quite late in the sequence of type 49 (pl. 2, 36).

12. *A coin of series Z from Thetford*

Dr Ian Stewart acquired a very weathered and corroded sceat of series Z, in a small envelope on which was written, 'Thetford Museum. Enquiry 2857 (no. 2). Grid ref. 880 832.' Mr Chad Goodwin, the Curator of the Museum, has recently looked at the envelope and has kindly confirmed from his records that the coin was one of a number brought in for identification in December 1980 by Mr M. Aho, the Manager of the Thetford Glass Company. The coins and other small metal objects were metal detector finds from an area covering about a quarter of the field identified by the grid reference, which was then about to be developed for a new housing estate. The other coins and tokens were mainly of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The sceat was identified for Mr Aho by the County Museums service at Norwich, and given a reference to the Cimiez hoard.

Blackburn and Bonser recently published a survey of the topography of Anglo-Saxon and later coin finds from Thetford. The sceat is probably from the same site as their Site B, or very close to it (see the plan in *BNJ* 54 (1984), 70). Immediately to the south a late-ninth century coin was found, which had apparently been dredged from the River Thet.

A sceat of series R 2 (*Wigrd*) can be added from the Red Castle site, about 1 km west of the town centre (see the plan in *Norfolk Archaeology* 34 (1966-9), 119).

The reverse die of the Thetford find is new: the beast is compressed towards the lower left of the available space. The obverse die appears also to be unrecorded, so far as its poor condition permits one to judge.

The corpus of specimens of series Z may be dressed briefly as follows. Nos. 1-4 have *rev.* beast left, and nos. 5-11, beast right.

1-3 *RN* 1938, pl. 4, 71-2 (Cimiez?); Ashmolean, ex Lockett 245, found 'near London'. 1.37, 1.32, 1.44g. Analysis Ca.5 (65-74% silver, traces of gold and zinc). All three coins are extremely heavy. They all appear to be from the same dies.

⁴⁵ I am indebted to Miss Anne Bone, of the Chichester District Museum, who kindly made repeated enquiries about the coin.

NC (1953), pl. 7, 13, ex Lockett 244 ex Grantley 688, 0.91g.

TMP 1895, pl. 1, 13 (presumably found at Domburg).

SCBI Copenhagen 47, 1.07g.

Ashmolean ex Evans, = *TMP* 1895, pl. 1, 14, 1.19g.

Billingsgate find (above, pl. 1, 4), 1.22g. From the same obv. die as no. 7.

Caistor St Edmunds find, Christie's, 4 Nov. 1986, lot 364 (illus.) 1.17g.

Thetford find

SCBI Glasgow 116, 0.59g (Æ?)

PLATE I



PLATE 2



19



20



21



22



23



24



25



26



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28



29



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31



32



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34



36

35
(× 2)